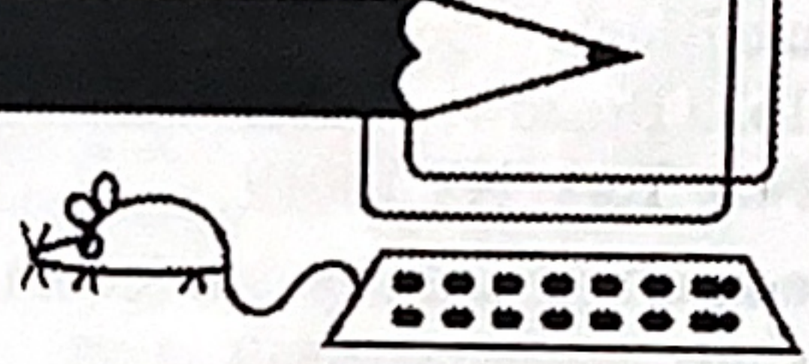
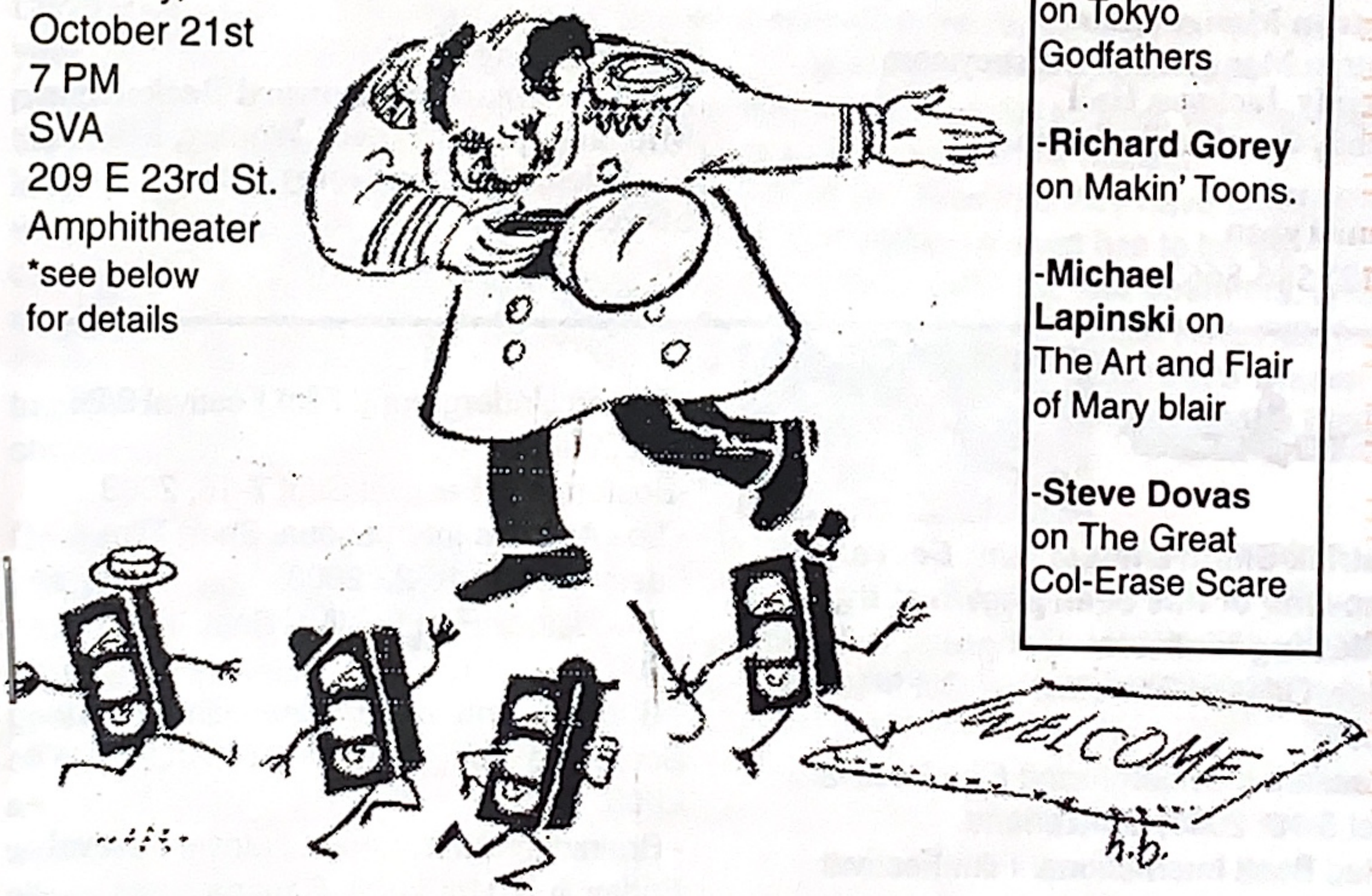
ASIFA EAST
The International Animated Film Society
ANYMATOR
October 2003 Issue



ASIFA EAST October Event :

The Open Screening!!!

Tuesday,
October 21st
7 PM
SVA
209 E 23rd St.
Amphitheater
*see below
for details



also inside:

-**Michael Sporn** on "Toon Boom or Bust"

-**Trevor Wooley** on Tokyo Godfathers

-**Richard Gorey** on Makin' Toons.

-**Michael Lapinski** on The Art and Flair of Mary blair

-**Steve Dovas** on The Great Col-Erase Scare

*** Please arrive no later than 6:30 if you'd like to screen your film/excerpt/work-in-progress/etc at the **Open Screening**. We will only be accepting animation on VHS and 3/4 inch tape. Be prepared to say a few words about your clip.

ASIFA East

The International Animated Film Society Northeast /New York Chapter

A Program of the New York Foundation For The Arts

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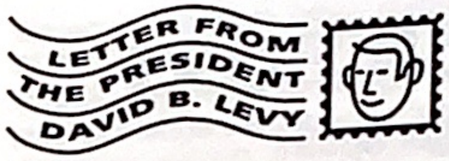
Patrick Smith's latest film, *Delivery*, is showing or has been shown at the following festivals! Congrats, Patrick!

-New Orleans Film Festival Oct 9-16, 2003.
-Lausanne Underground Film Festival Oct 5-10, 2003, Switzerland.
-Red Bank International Film Festival Oct 3-10, 2003.
-Sacramento Festival of Cinema Oct 4, 2003.
-Pusan International Film Festival Oct 2-10, 2003, Korea.
-Great Lakes International Film Festival Sept. 11-14, 2003.
-Portland Independent Animation Festival Aug. 18-24, 2003. *WINNER!
-Boston Underground Film Festival 9/26-10/2, 2003
-Boston Film Festival Sept 7-16, 2003
- Los Angeles International Short Film Festival Sept. 16-22 2003.
- Woodstock Film Festival Sept. 17-21 2003.
- Rhode Island International Film Festival Screening along with "DRINK". July 2003.
- Brainwash Underground Movie Festival Friday July 11th 2003, Canada.
- Cartoon Club International Animation Festival July 9-30 ,2003, Rimini, Italy.
- Carolines Comedy Club July 1, 2003, New York City. *AWARD WINNER!
- Cordoba Animation Festival, May 28-30, 2003 Argentina.
- ASIFA-East Animation Festival May 4, 2003, *AWARD WINNER!



"Blackouts, Circles, & Jurys ...or "How I Spent Summer Vacation"

A new Asifa-East season is upon us. Where did the summer go? I hope you all faired well during the Blackout of 2003. For me, it was business as usual. I normally walk across the Queensboro Bridge with a million people only to go home and sweat it out by candle light. No, it's not as romantic as it sounds. Our time in the dark prompted many (or at least **Rob Marianetti**) to ask, "Where did all the circles go?" Rob raises a good question. Why do so many recent flops and failures of 2D animation on the big screen feature square or angular worlds and characters? In these films, everything from fingers to chins are chiseled in harsh and cold straight lines (think, Treasure Planet, Atlantis, The Road To Eldorado, Sinbad, etc). It's interesting to note that the largest 2D success of the last five years was Lilo and Stitch, which featured extremely rounded character designs. Pixar knows the value and the appeal of circular design. Can you imagine any of the Pixar films without the circle? Would they have been the same satisfying experience? Oddly enough, at the movie theatre concession stands, the circle is taking over. Kit-Kat, Snickers, Milky Ways and many more are all available as rounded bite-size snacks. If you're on the Atkins diet, let me apologize right now.

Circle or no circle, it'll be interesting to see what animation trends await us in the next year. No doubt, there will be more well-received CGI features and more cheaply produced Flash animated series TV. With so many out of work for so long, we may see the rise of more independent animation. Unfortunately, many of the busiest independents rely on income sources that have dried up. Now that they have more time, they may not have any funding. Still, the cost of making a short has to be the cheapest it has ever been (no expensive film and lab fees, cells, camera operators, and negative cutters). Did you know that **Mike Overbeck's** ASIFA-EAST FESTIVAL BEST IN SHOW film, **Tongues and Taxis**, was drawn directly into the computer (on a wacom tablet) and put together in Flash? A fine reminder that great films can still be made (and cheaply) in this new age.

On the other hand, the computer makes it easier than ever before to do bad animation. I recently sat on a jury with **Dale Clowdis, Elanna Allen**, and **Loren Bouchard**. We watched student animation made at The School Of Visual Arts (SVA). There were about 40 films. Some were fantastic! The best films always seem to be the ones that have a good understanding of story telling, filmmaking and enough dexterity of the hand to pull off the rest. This was the first year that all the thesis films were made digitally (sans cels and the Oxberry camera). I couldn't shake the memory that in the days of film, there were jarring camera moves, clumsy cycles, and bad exposures. The computer now allows folks to do that faster and cheaper. You can't blame the computer for that. That would be like blaming a pencil for a bad drawing. And no one's ever done that...right?

Please join us on October 21 as we revel in the Open Screening. Hope to see you there!

VIEW POINT AIEM

TOON BUST

by Michael Sporn

I think I may have heard wrong. At least I hope I did. Someone tell me I was wrong and correct me. Please.

ASIFA-East, last month, participated in a talk, a conference, a gathering of professional people around a table in the front of the SVA auditorium of gathered students, professionals, and others from the publishing world (the focus behind the occasion was to sell books for Allan Neuwirth, the moderator of the panel). Guests included Linda Simensky (Cartoon Network Executive and former ASIFA-East President), Dave Levy (present ASIFA-East President and "BLUE'S CLUES" director), John Dilworth (creator of "COURAGE, THE COWARDLY DOG" and noted animation director/producer), Yvette Kaplan (director of many things including "BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD DO AMERICA"), Howard Beckerman (ageless NY animation director and author of "THE WHOLE STORY").
Oh yes, there was one more on the panel, Stephen Daly, a writer for Entertainment Weekly.

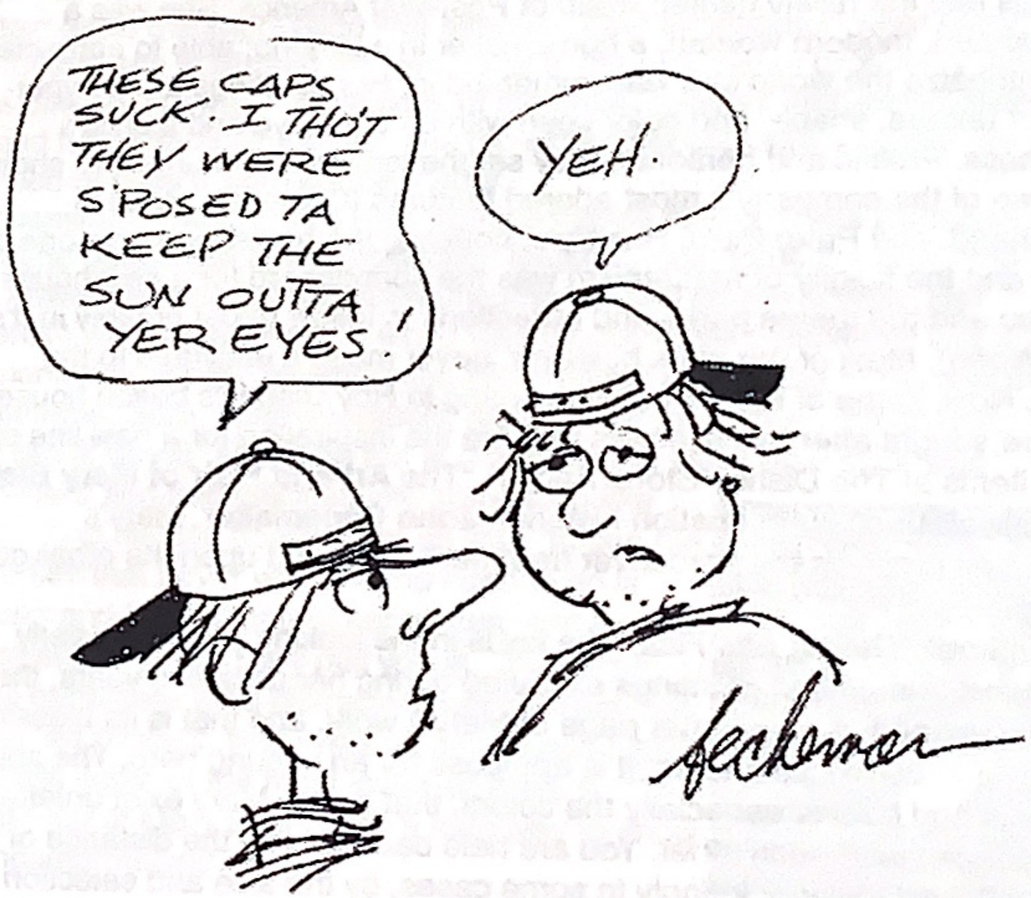
There was lots of good banter and conversation espoused on the tightly packed audience crammed into the tight-fitting theater seats. Some of it was pertinent; all of it was geared to question whether 2D Animation might be dead. The program was called "Toon Boom or Bust". To this end Allan Neuwirth, in directing the panel, had some good questions. The advice I took from Dave Levy was smart: just keep doing what you do best – animate 2D if that's what you do. Find a way and do it.
Dilworth was astute and intelligent in his brilliant comment that animation, like the rest of the world, seems to have fallen to a process of numbers: keying and typing and computing. He poignantly expressed his desperate need to work with a pencil. Linda Simensky, in answer to a question, talked about "pitching" projects to Networks.

But the point I want to mention is the side comment that Stephen Daly made, and was ignored by the rest of the panel - including me, I might mention, sitting fuming in my seat instead of shouting out a polite response. He said that the audiences have grown used to and in love with 3D animated images and have no time for 2D. And they won't anymore. At first I thought I must have misheard something he'd said, but then found that I wasn't the only person who'd heard it. How could anyone make such a comment in a room full of 2D animators and not get anyone downright angry? And why? But nothing was said; everyone was polite. No one seemed to have heard it. What an unbelievably obtuse comment!

At the turn of the century (19th to 20th) motion picture photography astounded the world. Cheap entertainment of 3D images dancing on the screen was followed quickly by 2D images drawn by animators. Movies were the point – not 2D or 3D but movies. 1911 saw Winsor McCay's "LITTLE NEMO" animated on screen. People rushed to see and loved it. The reviews were sensational. They weren't aghast that the image was not 3D. No one seemed to have minded that some of the best films of all time were 2D. At least not up until these last three years. These last three years that Disney and Dreamworks have been making horrible 2D films like SINBAD or TREASURE PLANET and successful films like FINDING NEMO or TOY STORY are coming from PIXAR. They don't challenge their writers – as they would do in live-action films – they challenge the medium. It must be a 2D problem. (Never mind that in the last three years LILO & STITCH was enormously successful, never mind that those Disney reworked made-for-video programs such as LADY & TRAMP II or RETURN TO NEVERLAND were enormously successful. Doesn't this lead us to believe that the truth may be something bigger than 2D or 3D?)

Now we have 3D animation. We've already seen that the movement of these characters can be just as bad as the worst animation done in 2D. Clichés have already hit the screen in 3D; story development has already started to drag in 3D. How soon will people be condemning that medium? If SHREK II is a stinker and bombs, how soon before Jeffrey Katzenberg (Wasn't he supposed to be animation's savior? Wasn't he supposed to be the new Walt Disney?) says that they won't make another 3D film –he's already done that with 2D. How soon before Michael Eisner closes all his 3D shops (he's closed the 2D animation at Disney California, he's closing the Disney Orlando, he's closed – as of today – Disney Japan)? How soon before they give that up and stop making animation altogether?

Maybe if more of us didn't just listen to the Stephen Daly's of the world say unconscionable things about our profession - our hobby - our passion – they wouldn't continue to demean us. Especially in front of an esteemed panel of animators and professionals talking to some of the animators of the future.



BOOK REVIEW

by Michael Lapinski

The Art and Flair of Mary Blair

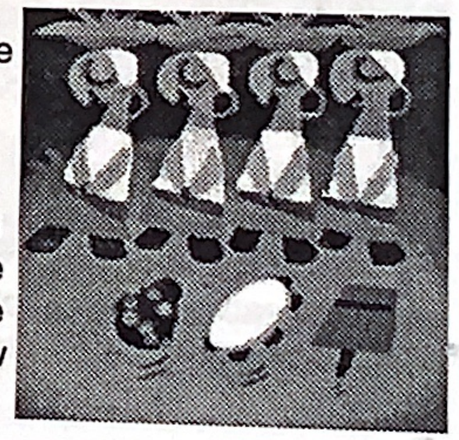
by John Canemaker

Your sketchbooks will someday become a museum piece. At least that's the promise of our compulsively media hungry Page Six, Behind the Music, project greenlit culture. You create something, and the process itself becomes the product. A DVD without behind-the-scenes access is like an empty piñata. In the field of animation, original production art, those paintings and sculptures commissioned to excite the DNA of a nascent feature, take on the air of lost masterpieces. Culled from the talents of artists often working in the adjacent markets of comics and children's book illustration, this art receives ample visibility and dollar value in the obligatory "Art of" books and in the form of high-end tchotchkes and apparel for discerning consumers. But more often than not this peek behind the curtain begs the real question, "What if they actually went with this?" What if the finished product, all polished and safe, behaved more like the wild petri dish that spawned it? To ask this question is to look at the life and career of one artist in particular; **Mary Blair.** Mary was the quintessential Disney Imagineer who was entrusted by Walt with the task of shepherding the studio output from its pastoral 19th century moorings into the newly minted world of Post-War America. She was a sophisticated, modern woman, a homemaker in a kimono; able to appreciate and synthesize the world she was immersed in. Her paintings are a hyper-reality of texture, shape, and color seen with an adult eye and a child's playfulness. Prolific and personal, they set the template for numerous shorts and three of the company's most adored features (Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland, and Peter Pan). Her style, coupling the homespun comforts of folk art and the fluidity of modernism was the springboard for a new house aesthetic and the theme parks and attractions to follow (most notably in It's A Small World). Most of her work however, never made it undiluted to the screen. Now, some of Mary's paintings hang in Roy Disney's beach house. They are sought after by collectors and are the inspiration for a new line of quality items at The Disney Store. And, in **"The Art and Flair of Mary Blair, An Appreciation"** by animation historian **John Canemaker,** Mary's contribution receives the hardcover treatment bestowed upon the other gods of ink and paint.

Throughout "The Art and Flair," the joy is in the looking. From her early student assignments to paintings executed during her declining years, the book is designed as page after page of Mary's work, and that is its blessing. Along with effusive pull quotes, it is applause for an unsung hero. The shapes and forms and colors, especially the colors, that define Mary exist unfettered and in concert with each other. You are held back only by the distance of the page itself, and, disappointingly in some cases, by the size and selection of some reproductions. The book, and her work, could only have benefited from the addition of all out full-bleed spreads with room to do their thing. Although they are easy on the eyes, Mary's images do not read simply as pretty pictures. To see them is to see that they are solutions to problems. The accompanying text is a sparse, but thorough, account of the highlights of her life and career, and the larger economic and political world that shaped her from illustrator into visionary. I am moved by the love and ideals the newlyweds Mary and Lee shared for their craft and each other. In Mary's career defining on-site excursion to South America, I am reminded that to define your own style is to step outside and allow the world to excite your senses. The sky is blue wherever you go, but you need to see it for yourself.

In the fable of Mary Blair and the Nine Old Men, the Disney artists gave animus to pencil lines that suggested volume, layers of matter, gravity. What they conveyed was the "illusion of life." By flattening forms, rigorously contrasting coupled colors, and infusing her compositions with overall patterning and local textiles, Mary displayed something akin to the spark of life. Her artwork explores the emotional values of color and the essence of organic forms in order to convey the character's and, in turn, the viewer's experience of a scene. Don't just tell me how it looks. How does it feel? In her hands, the world is stripped of its skin; less and less becomes more and more. These aims could not always live comfortably in the same house. Some artists complained that her art couldn't be animated because of its inherent flatness. Others, like Ward Kimball, came to her defense, spitting "She would inspire people but her drawings would be bastardized." There are too few side by side comparisons in the book to witness the translation of her art to film first-hand. The text gives the impression that although Walt appreciated what Mary contributed, she illustrated his own belief in the promise of prosperity that the future offered. He was too cautious of the public's tastes and expectations to proceed fully with anything that was too experimental. Unfortunately, we don't get much of Mary's word on the matter.

Mary considers the Day-Glo Baja train sequence in The Three Caballeros, in which she painted all of the production backgrounds, to be the only time her "own artwork and style" appeared uncompromised on the screen. Her Cinderella would have been a world where people are completely lost in the ornamentation of their environment. Wonderland is a puzzle of perspectives and patterns. Sure, Mary eventually realized her art in three dimensions in the "It's a Small World" attraction but at that point the Mary Blair style was everywhere and had calcified into something like fashion. And fashion doesn't age as well. To see the feature film that never was, all you need to do is look long and hard at one of her pieces, and the camera starts to roll. They pull you in. They aren't colorful ephemera for a distracted culture. They are the finished product. Mary was a complicated figure who made some of the most joyful art there is. "The Art and Flair of Mary Blair" goes a long way to show her, uncompromised.



TOKYO GODFATHERS a film by Satoshi Kon

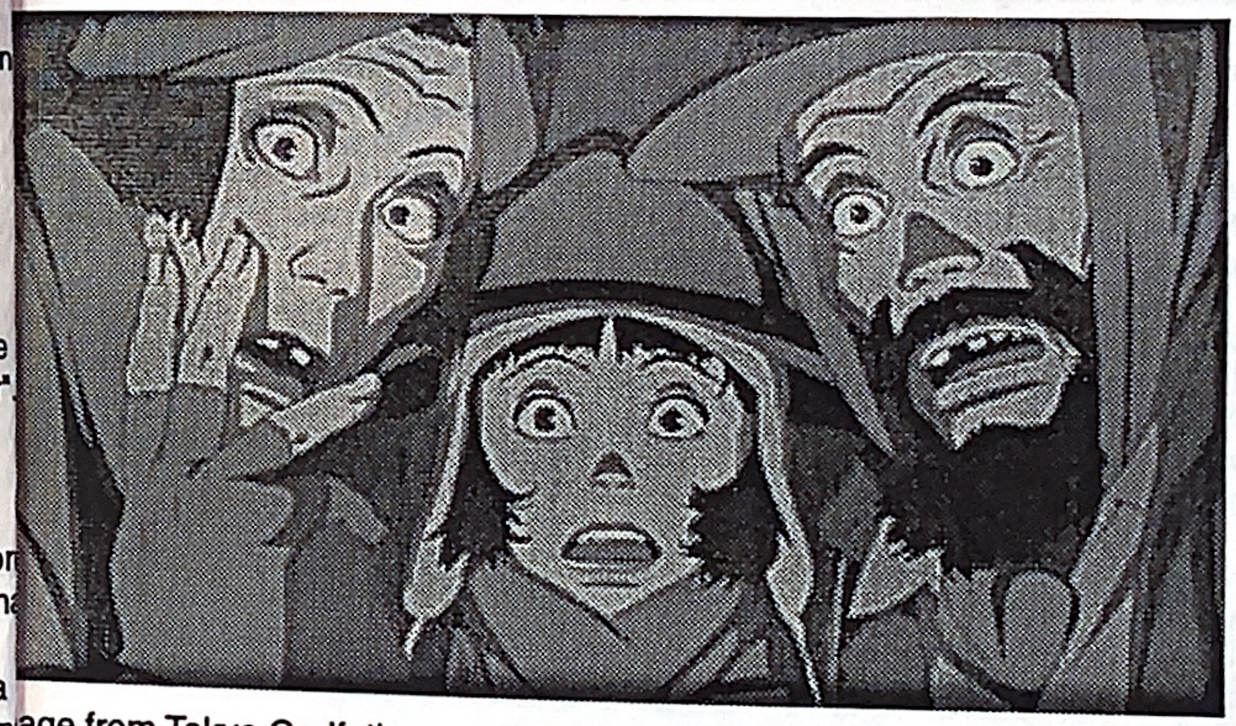
Review by Trevor Woolley

It was a dark and not-so stormy night, I guess it must have been a year ago now, and I found myself strolling down Ditmars Boulevard in the good company of our esteemed ASIFA president David Levy. We'd just had dinner and were heading towards our neighborhood provider of videos to rent some black and white tale of the macabre when we came face to face with an incredibly vicious fight between two homeless men. Now, you hear about these things happening to other people all the time, but you never know just how you're going to react when confronted with two honest to God dueling Hobos. I'm sorry to report that I did not rise to the occasion, opting instead to avert my gaze to the ground in an attempt to avoid any unpleasantness. But not Dave Levy. No sir, not Dave Levy. The man has an insurmountable moral conscious and an overwhelming desire to bring about sincere social reform - which I guess is why he looked directly at the two squabbling squatters and declared in his most heart-panged voice, "I hate it when Hobos fight". I looked at him for a long time, and then I looked at him so more, and to be honest I've never looked at him the same way again. But the man was right, it's a scary thing to watch, so imagine my surprise when someone turned the scene into an animated feature.

The movie is called **Tokyo Godfathers, Satoshi Kon's** (Perfect Blue, Millennium Actress) newest directorial endeavor to hit the states. It's an urban Christmas fairy tale of loss and forgiveness set in the Gutters of Japan. It follows three homeless citizens named Gin (a former cycle racer and bicycle shop owner), Hana (a former drag queen), and Miyuki (a young runaway) as they discover a baby in the garbage and set upon returning the infant to her parents.

The story itself is presented in the grand tradition of Wilde's "The Importance of Being Ernest", Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby", or even Stallone's "Oscar". Whatever works for you. its a comedy of errors and coincidence skillfully woven together with the tales of our heroes revisiting their past to find redemption in a world where they thought they could never go home again. There are a plethora of themes and threads in the piece, all of which are wor on the sleeve of it's director. There's an unusual take on the story of Christm complete with a Christ child bringing forgiveness, a virgin birth, angels, shepherds and even three wise men to tote the baby around. There's also a very permeating Buddhist philosophy concerning the nature of happiness an it's achievement through the lack of distraction, or in this case the lack of anything.

The script, although very well adapted, has a lot of explaining to do as to why the trio thinks a family that abandoned its baby in the trash would want it back, or why "Team Hobo" just didn't go straight to the police in the first place. But, you know what? It manages to do it. The animation is super-solid and is speckled with some inspired squash and stretch face-work and extremely lush backgrounds. There's an ulcer-inducing sense of tension that carries most of the film, and what it misses the strong characterizations of it's three well balanced leads pick up. OK, that's all well and good, but all of this means very little unless I can tell you if I liked it or not, doesn't it? Well, I can already tell you that it's going to be one of those galvanizing sort of things. Some people are going to leave shrugging their shoulders, and some people are going to leave with a new favorite film. The important thing to note is that even those shrugging their shoulders will leave with a smile on their face. The film is very well done and positively entertaining, but it just begs the question, "Why was it animated?" There was nothing about it that required a hand drawn approach (save for the over exaggerated facial reactions) and I for one felt that the endeavor might have been better received live action. It's a silly critique, I know, but you leave saying the film was "nice" and I honestly think this is why. I will say this though, if you have a chance, you should go take it in. Even if you're not anime's biggest fan, it's interesting to see the cultural distinctions epresented in the film through it's portrayal of its subculture. There's also a reat score, great action sequences, brief nudity, and if that's not enough, it ill leave you all tingly just in time for the holiday season. I mean come on, ou know you want to get all tingly.



age from Tokyo Godfathers.

Ever Wanted to Eat Your Animation?

by Nadia Roden

I began my career in fine arts and everything I have done since has grown out of that painterly practice. I like to think of my animations as moving paintings.

The idea for my book **Granita Magic**, grew out of an animation I made. I was animating fruit and couldn't decide on how to end the piece. Naturally, I thought they should turn themselves into a dish, a recipe we could eat.

Food and recipes run in the family, my mother is Claudia Roden, who was the first to bring Middle-Eastern and Mediterranean cooking to England, and so the leap from animation to recipes seemed natural.

Whilst experimenting with fruit desserts, I started making granitas (a classic water ice) I loved them so much that I kept making more and more, experimenting with ingredients and flavors like I experiment with colors. I thought of my granitas as an expression of the true essence of the ingredient, since granitas taste so pure and intense. Their colors also intrigued me, as did their beautiful glittering sequin-like texture.

I created a mock-up book idea and submitted it to Artisan book publishers in New Yor On each page I painted a 1950's type wallpaper or textile design inspired by the ingredients, color and taste of each granita. I tried to capture the fluidity, freedom and fun I use in my animations, adhering also to the 50's feeling.

The publisher loved the concept immediately. It was to be the first book solely devote to the simple classic flavored ice named Granita. It was also an art book in the guise a cookbook!

Granita Magic came out this June and hooray, it captured the imagination of many, including Martha Stewart, who invited me onto her show to make granitas with her. CBS News also asked me to appear on the Early Show where I had to make 3 granita in 4 minutes, and Oprah Whinfrey's magazine, "O" published a 9 page spread on the book and my work as an artist.

So I say, never be afraid to follow a passion, even when that means trying something totally new. I am now back to animating, moving freely from the sense of sight to the sense of taste. I have just finished an underwater animation for Sesame Street and I think it may have just inspired a seafood guide and a course in deep-sea diving.

***Granita Magic, by Nadia Roden; Artisan Press, 2003, $15

ANNOUNCEMENT "Breaking News"

uilding on the success of their April, 2003 event, "War Culture", stART returns in the all of 2003 with it's new event, **"Breaking News."** With artists and performers from all isciplines, "Breaking News" will be a carnival anti-celebration of what has become the edia Industrial Complex.

Where does your news come from? "Breaking News" will explore those strange edfellows, journalism and commerce, and how their ongoing affair affects the ay the world operates and how we view it.

Is it reporting? A consumer orgy? A masquerade of propaganda? Suffering as ntertainment? Or just a daily dose of lowest-common-denominator content for the asses? It's all of this and more.

s "Breaking News."

tART is a multidisciplinary art series at Judson Church that seeks to stand t the intersection of arts, politics and spirituality. stART's goal is to present events that cus on a single issue in thoughtful, complex ways through art, dance, music, spoken ord, and multi-media theater. It's inaugural event, on April 3, 2003, was on the theme AR CULTURE and featured 26 artists from all disciplines. It's core group of rganizers, all with close ties to Judson Church, represent a new generation of artist-ctivists including: **Ward Sutton**, syndicated political cartoonist (Schlock'n'Roll) and nimator; Karen Sherman, performance artist and Judson Church administrator; irector and producer Ralph Lewis and producer and actress Catherine Porter, co-rtistic directors of Peculiar Works Project.

hursday, October 9th at 7pm
dditional Gallery Hours: Friday - Sunday, Oct. 10-12, 1-6pm
dmission is FREE
dson Church
5 Washington Square South (at Thompson St.)

fo: 212-477-0351
ww.judson.org

THE GREAT COL-ERASE SCARE OF 2003

By Steven Dovas

It started the same way most rumors do: a jumble of fact, semi-fact and misinformation, assembled like a game of Telephone.

For me, it began with a panicked email from a student of mine exclaiming to her classmates that Col-Erase pencils were being discontinued, "so you'd better stock up."

Erasable colored pencils have long been part of the average Traditional Animator's toolkit, and Sanford's Col-Erase pencils have been, at least in my experience both in New York and Los Angeles, the erasable colored pencil of choice. They erase fairly cleanly (unlike Sanford's Prismacolor), they don't have imperfections in the lead that mar the quality of the line, they come in a wide range of colors and, unlike the Koh-I-Noor Koh-Erase colored pencil (a fine pencil also), one can actually find them with relative ease. You use them, admit it, and most of you are hard-pressed to think of another brand. Most people think automatically of the Col-Erase pencil when they think of erasable color pencils. Why so many animators use them could be a column all its own, from seeing the drawings by the old masters in colored line (and when I say "old masters" mean both Da Vinci and Fred Moore) to the feeling of not "committing" to a drawing until the black line is out down, to a student differentiating parts of a complex design by doing sequential rough in different colors.

So the idea that this cornerstone of our trade could possibly be discontinued was not received particularly well, as you might imagine. How could this be? I wrote back to the student in question: where did you come across this shocking revelation?

"The school art supply store didn't have any more Blue, and when I asked them about Non-Photo Blue they told me it was discontinued. When I asked about regular Blue they said they thought that the whole line was discontinued. So I went to Pearl and they said th same thing." By the end of the next day, the Art Supply store at the Pratt Institute had sold out of Col-Erase pencils. So had the somewhat overpriced store just down the street from the Pratt Campus.

This was beginning to get interesting. A run on Col-Erase pencils. Early April; I was beginning a large commercial job, several assistants would be working with me, so in the interests of a smooth workflow– and not at all in any desperation, at least not yet – I ventured to Canal Street to the usually reliable Pearl Paint to stock up on Col-Erase. A wa down Canal Street through the mid-day throng, I arrived at Pearl, where I asked one of their always helpful but surly employees if they had an explanation for the huge empty case in the Pencils section where the Col-Erase pencils usually reside (and at one of the city's best prices, I might add). Row after row was bare, with a few Col-Erase Orange, Brown, and Purple scattered about, and a large number of White standing eraser-up in th bins. Not, to say the least, the first colors one expects to use when roughing out animatior The clerk was definitive: "That's all we have left. We haven't gotten them in weeks. I hear they're discontinuing them."

I walked out of Pearl Paint that day with a dozen Purple, half a dozen Orange, and four Brown Col-Erase pencils. When I got back I made 2 phone calls. The first was to supplier Cartoon Colour, where the always-helpful Pookie was, while blissfully clueless about the allegedly impending doom of the Col-Erase pencil, happy to fill an order for me.

As six-dozen Col-Erase pencils rocketed across the country dragging their exorbitant ipping charges with them, I placed my final call: to the offices of the Sanford Company Bellewood, Illinois (a division of Rubbermaid…the same company makes Sharpies, ina Markers, Eberhard-Faber pencils, Paper-Mate, Parker pens, Liquid Paper, Trash ans, Blow torches, Composters…my head spun with this expanding world of ormation) whose website seemed to indicate that Col-Erase wasn't disappearing from e market any time soon. But this article'd be boring without a quote from a company presentative, so I made the call.

Chandra, a very helpful and obliging Customer Service representative, was happy to urify for me and for Col-Erase users everywhere the status of their lowly but much- ed erasable color pencil. Some surprises were in store. No, they weren't being continued. A sigh of relief from me. Why, then, the confusion? Well, the explanation nt, they WERE discontinuing the individual sale of several of their colors. Which ones, you might wonder as I did, were they going to continue to sell ividually? Blue, Carmine Red, Scarlet Red, Green, Yellow, and Non-Photo Blue. nd the rest? (there's more? Yes) Ah, there's the key: the rest of the Col-Erase palette s only going to be available in sets of 12 and 24 colors. Light Blue? Purple? Black? ange? Only in sets of 12 & 24.

Was the Sanford Company aware of the impression that several NY area art supply res had that their erasable color pencils were being discontinued? Was the Sanford mpany aware of their products place in the work of animators everywhere? word, clueless. The Sanford Company has no idea that animators use their ducts every day. What, I asked, did they think was the main use of their Col-Erase ncils?

lor-Coding things, files and around the office."

azing. And what were the most popular Col-Erase colors?

ple and brown of course. How could I not have known?

I hear you correctly?"

ed.

s I had. You can take your Blues and Reds, you—you– you Animators you, the age American Col-Erase user wants his or her Purples and Browns. This of course ot speak to why Sanford was only making those colors available as part of a larger And Chandra didn't know.

, we're spared being deprived of Col-Erase pencils. A non-event. But if you want browns, purples, and oranges, never mind your light blues, you need to buy a big along with colors you're never going to use (like brown and purple, for example). be you ought to try doing your roughs with a light line from a hard lead pencil. And n case, if you have a lead on where the Koh-erase pencils are kept in stock…

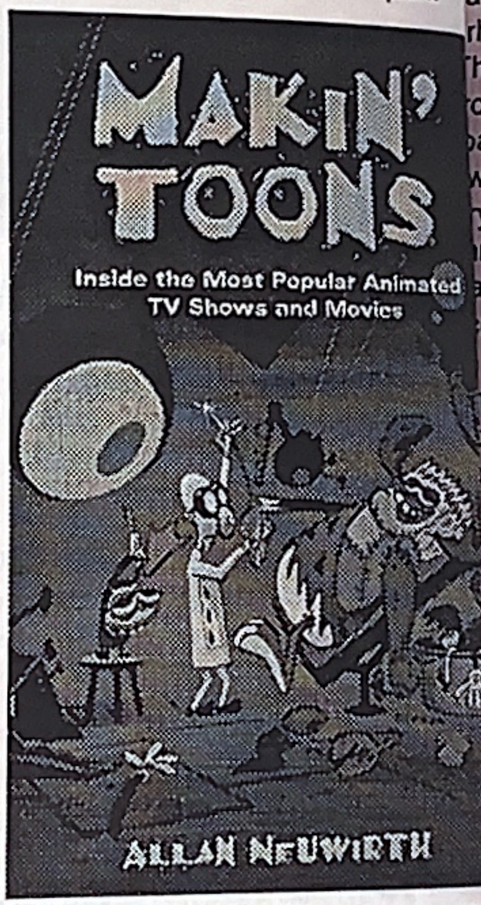
BOOK REVIEW Makin' Toons

by Rich Gorey

The past two decades have been significant and tumultuous for animation. We've see the industry emerge from the desperate doldrums of the seventies to a kind of "Secon Golden Age" through the eighties and nineties, with feature-length gems like Beauty and the Beast, Roger Rabbit, Toy Story, and Ice Age. On television, a similar renaissance has surfaced, spawning such classic shows as The Simpsons, Powerput Girls, SpongeBob SquarePants, and Fish Police. Okay, well maybe not Fish Police. B you get the point. There's been tremendous activity within the industry, and venues fo offbeat, more adult subject matter have expanded dramatically. This is the good news The bad news is that in the past few years, animators have seen opportunities, studi and budgets disappear. The exhilarating "Toon Boom"- in some observers eyes- has gone bust. Or something like that. It all depends on whom you talk to.

Hopefully, if you're in animation, you'll someday wind up talking to **Allan Neuwirth** who's just given us **Makin' Toons**, his wonderful book on the state of the industry a the "state of the art" of animation. Makin' Toons explores the very complex and ever last fifteen years in animation, through first-hand accounts of the journey. It's one of the best books in years on the subject, due not only to Neuwirth's status within the field, but to his ingratiating enthusiasm for cartoons and their creators.

"Hi," he says, in his foreword. "My name is Allan. Like many of you out there, I'm a toon-a-holic." It's our introduction to the author, and his energy level remains true to this opening statement throughout the work. Neuwirth's book is a guided tour through the ups and downs (and downs) of a difficult career, yet somehow the impression he and his fellow artists leave is the notion that despite their frequent disappointments, they wouldn't have traded their experiences for the world.



The author has found a way to speak with great passion and warmth about an industry that- let's face it- hasn't been very kind to very many people, especially lately. Wisely choosing to focus on the artistry behind the recent films and television shows-- instead of the financial and artistic limitations involved in their creation-- (though these are examined) Neuwirth presents a picture of the process that's compelling even to those who know animation well. Reading Makin' Toons is like having a great three-hour lunch with the best minds in the industry, and coming away thinking, "I can do that!" It's the kind of sharing of information and philosophy that organizations like ASIFA were created for.

Early on, Neuwirth speaks about the power and exhilaration he felt as a young boy when he first realized "I could actually draw these characters, and put them through adventures

f my own"

I recall that delirious moment in my creative life as well. We all remember the first me we saw something we drew move on its own. This breakthrough in an animator's e is one of almost mythic impact: the curious thrill of it never wears off, does it? euwirth seems to know this instinctively, and his book is a series of encounters with ozens of people who feel the same way, and have, in their own lives, experienced this rill again and again.

Recently, I lectured for a high school animation class. I found several students ruggling with their inability to draw well, and several who had come up against a wall terms of communicating an idea through their drawing. I suggested that perhaps ere were other careers in animation besides "animator", and this came as a shocking velation to them. I recall the time when I believed to be "in animation" was to sit a table and draw over a lightbox. Now I see how limiting this perspective was. It may a stumbling block for many young artists who've been inspired by cartoons, but n't see themselves actually creating the sketches and characters.

Makin' Toons may be of use to such people. It explores all the facets of the industry, m the original concept that drives a project, to writing (an integral part of a cartoon's ccess' often overlooked) to design (incredibly important) and voice characterizations at all conspire to bring the characters to life onscreen. It's a book about cartoons, tensibly, but it's also about painting, color, light, work-ethic, depression,collaboration, d the unparalleled pleasure of actually COMPLETING something. Hopefully it will ow those interested in the business that there are dozens of ways to contribute, thout actually having to render characters and sharpen pencils. I found especially eresting the chapter on the lovingly-sculpted figures of Kent Melton, which are used a guide for animators. Many of these tiny masterpieces have since become llector's items in their own right, just as cels have been much sought after by fans. ulpture is- to my way of thinking- very closely related to the art of animation. rhaps even more so lately-- in CGI films which require more dimensional performers. he book's informal tone and structure is well suited to its subject. Neuwirth oduces several key players and projects, then revisits these subjects later on, to and on earlier information. We first meet The Little Mermaid, for instance, through writers, Ron Clements and John Musker. They describe the process whereby the y took shape, and discuss their fortuitous meeting with composer Howard man, whose contribution to the film elevated it to classic status.

ter in the book, we encounter the film through the eyes of actress Pat Carroll, who ed the wicked Sea Witch, Ursula. Her description of seeing the film for the first time a big audience is charming and endearing. Carroll's memories of the project range informative ruminations on her approach to the mechanics of the role to her like delight at realizing the film itself had outgrown her contribution-- and her onality.

admirable that Neuwirth manages to sustain such a level of enthusiasm, idering several sobering accounts of long hours, missed opportunities, and bitter ppointments. Neuwirth has rounded out the book by focusing on a diverse group of rs, directors, and artists: he affords the same professional courtesy to the writer of vis and Butt-Head as he does to the talents behind Beauty and the Beast. Beavis Butthead may not have been one of my favorite shows, but Mike Judge, who ted it, and went on to helm King of the Hill, has some very intelligent and valuable s to say about the pair of very UNINTELLIGENT, low-rent characters who made famous.

as glad to see an interview with Eric Radomski, the background stylist and painter e superb Batman animated series. This is a show that has inspired a generation

of animators and toonheads, and it's nice to see it represented. Radomski talks about his collaboration with Bruce Timm, and how their vision for the series visually influenced the tone of the scripts and characters. What a leap cartoons have made since the sixties and seventies, in the sophistication of their comic book heroes. It's ju one of the encouraging trends explored in the book. It's as if today's generation of artists have reclaimed the characters they admired as kids, and thrown out the established rules regarding content and style. Or perhaps we're living through a time which the rules simply donít apply. What kind of animation will surface, in the afterma of September 11th? How has the recent cultural and technical revolution altered the way we see and experience the movies, and ourselves?

What's interesting about this generation of cartoon filmmakers is that their cultural influences are often other CARTOONS (unlike the artists of the first "Golden Age" whose influences were classical myths, the great works of literature, and established folk tales). Many times throughout the book, directors and artists will talk about their affection for shows like Scooby-Doo, and Space Ghost. What's remarkable about the work being created today is that despite the influences of a decade of Saturday Morning mediocrity, we're seeing shows whose imagination and artistry are so polished, complex, and brave. It seems the idioms of the seventies have become an archetype for something more cerebral and edgy. Perhaps shows like Scooby-Doo a He-Man were pop-culture artifacts even in their own time, but the work they influence seems to be more of a COMMENTARY on that culture. Animation is still a business, but it's a business that has been craftily infiltrated by people with genuine (and genuinely offbeat) talent. Luckily, Neuwirth has apparently unlimited access to these people., and therefore, so do we.

I enjoyed his chapter on Eric and Susan Goldberg, the husband and wife team wh have worked on Disney films like Aladdin, Pocahontas, and Fantasia 2000. Eric even mentions his stint of Richard Williams' Thief and the Cobbler. (And someday, I hope someone writes THAT book.) Perhaps only another animator could have gotten his subjects to open up about the technical details involved in making a performance co to life. Goldberg talks about things only animators could relate to, and get excited about; how the thickness of a line carries color, how the distinctive Hirschfeld illustrative style influenced the Genie's design. Eric's statement, "God, I miss curves. miss curves in animation. They're so NATURAL in animation," reminded me of the inherent simplicity many of us take for granted in cartoons. Sometimes it's good to have such basic truths restated.

Along the way, brief mention is made of one of my personal favorite films of the pa fifteen years, Chris Savino's brilliant Flintstones on the Rocks-- which I think is one o the best things ever done at the Cartoon Network. There's also considerable space devoted to the intricately conceived computer generated films of recent years, like Ice Age and Shrek. It's refreshing- after years of self-doubt and re-doing scenes five and six times- to know a film as successful as Shrek doesn't just HAPPEN, the first time off the boards. Sometimes, reading about other people's creative blocks and conflicts can be inspirational; at nearly every turn in Makin' Toons, despite hurdles and barriers, there's a conclusion in which a satisfying, entertaining product is the e result.

Neuwirth's style is elegant and pleasantly informal at the same time. The interview are structured within the narrative, illustrating points and explaining theories as they come up in conversation with his subjects. This approach keeps the artist's commen from existing in a vacuum. "I like design," says Scott Wills, referring to the sparsely beautiful Samurai Jack television series. "I like reducing things to their essence, and simplifying things- stylization and design. That's what I love." This love of design,

rawing, personality, color, cutting, and communicating is at the heart of Makin' Toons. I now there are a lot of people working in animation who are dejected, bitter, broke, and onflicted. We don't encounter too many of these along the way, in Neuwirth's tour rough modern cartoons. Is this a flaw? Should the book have focused more on the ownside of the industry, as it reels from a debilitating recession? Might it be useful for eople entering the business to be aware of the disturbing trends away from traditional and-drawing? Is the computer our friend, or is it- as some animators suspect- an evil evice, sent by Satan himself to destroy us?I can't say, but I will say this: few people e inspired by failure.

If you want to be a success, ask someone successful. That's what Allan has done, d in the process he's created a dense historical document on the animation field that ll be of even greater value when some of these people are no longer around (may t day be far, far into the future). I'm sure there's a dark side to the people we counter in Neuwirth's book. I'm sure there were times when they obsessed and uggled and failed and thought of throwing it all away. I've been there, too. I'm nvinced the corporate side of animation can be ruthlessly cruel. For every Shrek, re are perhaps ten or more Treasure Planets. This is a business that sometimes es people up and leaves them dazed, exhausted, and unrewarded. But- you know, amus Culhane already wrote THAT book. It's called Talking Animals and Other ople, and it's a gem. I once called it the "Mommie Dearest" of the animation fession.

There surely is room for a discussion of animation's pitfalls and heartaches. Makin' ons just isn't that book, and you can't criticize something for what it is not- you have comment on what it is. I believe Allan's work has merit as an instructional tool, ugh its entertainment value is considerable. But perhaps the book's greatest ction is its arrival at a period when many animators are faltering and suffering, and y be disconnected from the things they once found exhilarating and joyful in the ft. In this light, Neuwirth has done something of greater value than writing the book lf.

Makin' Toons is an uplifting and galvanizing work that comes at just the right time. two hundred pages plus of people who love what they do, and share that affection ly. The book would make an excellent reference for young animators who might be ggling with their place within the industry, and it should serve as a spark for blished creators who might find themselves stalled artistically and emotionally. n it's easier to solve a creative problem when you can read about the way ther artist got through his or her own "dark night of the soul".

ny complaints? Only that I wanted more, by the time I came to the end-- and ause the book speaks so frequently and eloquently to the uses and impact of color, ike to have seen Makin' Toons be given the deluxe treatment, with color trations, glossy pages, and a hard cover. And just for the record-- I LIKED Titan AE. well. Someday I'll write the coffee table book on THAT movie-- and my three ers will buy it.

the meantime, any animator who might be looking for a little- or a lot- of inspiration uld pick up Allan Neuwirth's beautifully written and researched Makin' Toons. It's not the book some of us were hoping for-- it's the book we needed.

FESTIVALS

First Annual CINEME™ International Animation Film Festival

November 6-9, 2003

September 20, 2003 – Chicago - **CINEME™**, North America's first ever 2ID / 3ID Digital Animation Film Festival, will showcase the best of animated cinema from around the world in the areas of animation, digital technology and filmmaking. The four-day festival, running November 6-9, 2003, will offer attendees a magnitude of illuminating screenings, workshops, panel discussions and exhibits featuring notable guests from animation powerhouses like Animax Entertainment, DreamWorks SKG, Pixar Animation Studios and Nickelodeon, just to name a few. In its inaugural year, CINEME is garnering attention from over 44 nations, with an excess of 70,000 hits to its website, www.CINEME.org, each month.

OPENING NIGHT GALA~CHARITY BENEFIT FOR GILDA'S CLUB

The opening ceremony of CINEME will be held on Thursday, Nov. 6 at 7:30 p.m., at the elegant European hotel, Le Meridien~Chicago. Honored guests, distinguished members of the press and the entertainment industry, as well as Consul Generals from all participating nations, will be on hand to usher in a new era in animation history for the City of Chicago. To kick off the festivities, ABC-7 Chicago veteran entertainment reporter Janet Davies will emcee the event, consisting of a stellar line-up of animated works courtesy of major film studios and television networks, such as Klasky Csupo ("The Wild Thornberries Movie", "Rugrats Go Wild"), Pixar Animation Studios ("Finding Nemo"), Sony Imageworks (Oscar-winning short "The ChubChubs!") and Walt Disney Pictures ("The Lion King"). Tickets cost $125/person; a portion of the proceeds will benefit Gilda's Club Chicago, a cancer support community offering emotional and social support for men, women and children living with cancer and families and friends.

CINEME SCREENINGS

On Friday, Nov. 7 – Sunday, Nov. 9, the international jury will view and judge festival entries divided into Competitive I and II screenings. These screenings are open to the public and capture the featured works of the festival entries in their entirety. Submissions include: Sony Pictures Imageworks' "Early Bloomer," directed by Kevin Johnson of the Oscar® award winning short "The ChubbChubbs," and Cartoon Network's "Samurai Jack, " created by Genndy Tartakovsky, plus many, many more. CINEME will feature Competitive I screenings on Friday, Nov. 7 at 7 p.m. and again Saturday, Nov. 8 at 10 a.m. at the Biograph Theater in Lincoln Park. Competitive II screenings will be shown Saturday, Nov. 8 at 5 p.m. and again Sunday, Nov. 9 at 9:30 a.m. – location TBA. Individual screenings run approx. two hours and are $10/person with packages and group rates available.

CINEME WORKSHOPS & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

On Friday, Nov. 7, CINEME offers guests a day of workshops and panels conducted by preeminent animation companies and artisans, such as Digital Domain, Exposure Films (UK), General Mills (equity characters, i.e. Trix the Rabbit), Nickelodeon, Sony Imageworks and Walt Disney Pictures.

***CINEME Tickets may be purchased both individually or as a package with rates ranging from $10 (120 screenings in addition to exclusive workshops/panels) to $425 (Dream Pass, inclusive of both opening night gala and closing night awards' ceremony). To learn more about CINEME and the festival's latest additions, log onto www.CINEME.org or contact Nancy A. Simon, CINEME marketing director at 312.527.4444 ext. 104 or Lisa Hall, Magnet Communications at 312.494.1461.

FESTIVALS

The Student Animation Festival at Ottawa

The 2nd SAFO Teacher's Symposium
Friday October 17th 9am-6pm

SAFO 03 is pleased to bring back our 2nd Teacher's Symposium. Animation teachers from around the world will attend the day-long conference to discuss the current state of animation education, discuss new methodologies, industry pressures, and how to work together to solve various pedagogical problems facing educators in this heavily competitive digital era.

Highlights include:

9am-9: 30pm
John Canemaker's Keynote Address: Back To Basics.
We are honoured this year to welcome internationally recognized animator, historian and teacher, John Canemaker, as our Keynote Speaker for this year's Symposium.
Mr. Canemaker will speak about the need for teachers to reiterate the continuing importance of communication, storytelling, animation history, drawing and soul, in this age of high technology.

10am-11: 30am: Media Envy
In the convergence of traditional and digital in education, where does the crossover happen from 'principles' to 'practical' instruction when an animation program must embrace both "traditional" animation and CG? How does one best keep from becoming excessively conceptual?
Moderated by **Steven Dovas.** Panelists: Ruth Lingford (Royal College of Art), Gerry Paquette (Algonquin College), Mike Fowler (Fowler Cartoon Ink).

2pm-3:30pm You want a Second Opinion? You're Ugly, too.
Enthusiasm, drive, wherewithal, but not a lick of talent, insight, or ability. What does one do when a student has everything but what he needs the most? If a boom in animation has caused a great wave in enrolment in animation programs, how do programs best deal with those people for whom no amount of education will help, especially if the wave has already crested? What are the responsibilities of a school in this circumstance? What are the responsibilities of a student to be harshly self-critical? Moderated by **Steven Dovas** Panelists: **John Canemaker** (NYU), Ellen Besen (Sheridan College)

4pm-5:30pm: Congratulations on Your Graduation, You're Unemployed
An examination of strategies for traditional and digital animation in education in a down market. How do you prepare students for a life of irregular work? This panel will examine of the difference between artistic and commercial fulfillment and their relative exclusivity. What, if anything, are animation programs doing to prep and expose their students to the real word of the workplace and the market?
Moderated by: Jean Detheux. Panelists: **Steven Dovas** (Pratt Institute), Anne Denman-Wilde, (Vancouver Film School), **Richard O'Connor** (Parsons), Carol Chaney (University of Michigan-Flint).

***Find out more about our Animation education options, including Digital Character Animation (Maya), at: www.vfs.com